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REVIEWS OF BOOKS AND AUDIOVISUAL AIDS

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The Sebaceous Glands in the Vermilion Border of the Lips and in the Oral Mucosa of Man, Ib Sewerin, D.D.S. Akademisk Forlag, Copenhagen, 1975. (*226 pp; $13.00*)

An unsettled issue in cutaneous physiology is whether the sebaceous glands of the skin of man have any functional or protective significance, as compared to their very appreciable role in animals. Even more uncertain is the question of a *raison d'être* for the lip and oral sebaceous glands (Fordyce spots), which, insofar as can be determined, are peculiarly restricted to man. These glands are examples of free sebaceous glands, i.e., those unassociated with hair follicles and thus opening directly to the surface. Clinically, they are usually visible to the naked eye and appear as multiple, whitish-yellow, macular or slightly elevated spots averaging 0.4 mm in size. They are more prevalent on the upper than the lower lip and in the oral cavity are found most frequently on the buccal mucosa. Pathologic alterations are rare, and their chief importance clinically is the alarm patients may show when they are first discovered. At times, physicians too may be ignorant of their nature.

Since their original discovery by Morgagnus in 1706, the subject of Fordyce spots has attracted the attention of many, primarily anatomists and stomatologists. Continuing interest in this field over the years is attested to by the large bibliography compiled in this published dissertation thesis by Sewerin who has, himself, carried out an extensive investigation of lip and oral sebaceous glands. While shedding no new light on the function of these glands, he has managed to add some new facts and belie some old ones. Dr. Sewerin examined the free sebaceous glands of the vermilion border of the lips and of the oral mucosa of 1,717 normal persons from age 9 to the very elderly. Nearly half of the subjects were under 16 years of age. Detailed study was made by visual inspection and measurement of the prevalence, size, and surface area density of the glands in these anatomical sites. From the welter of data, it was determined, among other things, that the incidence of these glands increases from late childhood (50%) to adulthood (90%), there being no recognizable abrupt rise at puberty, although the incremental change in this period appeared to be greater in boys. In the adult, the prevalence of these glands did not differ as to sex but, contrary to previous literature reports, glandular size and density were distinctly greater in men. This finding parallels that of the cutaneous glands and suggests a similar hormonal control mechanism. On the other hand, they continue to increase in size and density until the fifth decade, becoming thereafter less numerous in women but continuing to enlarge in size and number in men past the age of 70. They seem to be totally absent in some individuals and are absent in fetal tissue where cutaneous sebaceous glands are present in abundance. Little is known for certain of the endocrine or other influences upon these particular glands. That the author could not detect glandular differences from the normal in women on oral contraceptive drugs or in a small number of patients with Parkinson's disease provides only negative evidence of uncertain significance. It is disappointing that skin sebum measurements were not performed for comparative study.

An interesting new observation was the finding, encountered in two men, of open comedones on the lips. Neither individual had acne. Histologic examination revealed typical comedonal structures with attached sebaceous gland remnants; thus, bona fide comedo formation can occur in the presumed absence of a follicular epithelium.

While still leaving largely unanswered questions concerning the physiologic control and functional significance of lip and oral sebaceous glands, this volume has been executed in a scholarly manner and is the most comprehensive treatise on the subject to date.

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The Dermis and the Dendrocytes, Vol. 3 of The Physiology and Pathophysiology of the Skin, A. Jarrett (ed). Academic Press, Inc. (London) Ltd., 1975. (*425 pp; $34.50*)

The Dermis and the Dendrocytes is the third volume of the series, *The Physiology and Pathophysiology of the Skin*, edited by Dr. A. Jarrett. Dr. Jarrett authored the entire first volume on the epidermis and he has written almost the entire section on the dermis. Undoubtedly, his efforts were motivated by concern for quality; unfortu-